



Organization of a National Guard Wellness Program (FY02-2074)

Impact

Implementation of this project was interrupted by deployment. However, the project had positive ancillary outcomes (see below).

Description

In the absence of an organized wellness program, many Soldiers at armories in this state were overweight and/or exhibited poor fitness levels. The purpose of the initiative was to provide guided health assessments and goal setting for Soldiers. In addition, wellness briefings and regular reassessments were to be provided over a one-year period. The ultimate goal of this initiative was improved Soldier health and deployment readiness. Program success was to be measured by comparing weight and APFT passing rates to baseline data.

Outcomes

This program had a number of positive outcomes: baseline height/weight statistics, APFT scores, and Health Risk Appraisals were recorded. Soldiers were grouped by fitness level and ability group. These Soldiers then worked with fitness instructors to craft a personal fitness program with specific, measurable goals. At each armory, "wellness" boards were created and Soldiers began to log their monthly exercise sessions.

The Adjutant General (TAG) embraced this concept of wellness and purchased new fitness equipment for the creation of fitness centers in five armories. This wellness program was also to be evaluated for consideration for state-wide implementation. It should be noted that a company-sized element was mobilized for deployment, which slowed the pace of project implementation.

Innovative Features

The purpose of the initiative was to build an inexpensive yet effective Soldier wellness program through the integration of Army resources with local, state and web-based resources.

Lessons Learned

- Marketing a wellness program to civilian-Soldiers is a challenge. Leadership must be clear that this is not a fad but a real change in the way readiness is defined.
- Partnerships are crucial in implementing health programs that will have a broad impact.
- Individualized plans can be good motivators for health behavior change.